

The Print Club of New York Inc

Fall 2009

President's Greeting

Leonard Moss

Renowned artist Craig McPherson arrived at The National Arts Club in the early afternoon of September 21st to prepare the Sculpture Court for the opening event of the Print Club's 2009-10 season — his presentation of the 2009 commissioned print. When members and their guests arrived that evening, the sound system was turned on, the digital projection equipment was in working order and his framed mezzotint, *NY Water Tunnel*, was on an easel in a perfect location to greet the guests and whet their appetites for what was to come.

For over an hour, the audience sat in rapt attention as McPherson demonstrated the dedication and effort required to create the murals, paintings and mezzotints that are represented in the world's most prestigious museums. "The mezzotint technique is one of the most labor intensive of all print media. A year may be required to rock a copper plate of sufficient size to create the relatively large but delicate images I have in mind. I pull my own editions in order to have total control of the final product." McPherson showed how he modified existing optical equipment to be able to reproduce in exact proportion the landscape or building he was sketching. And he described the five years spent visiting the world's largest ports to create an 11 feet high by 318 feet long mural of the harbor cities of the world commissioned by American Express and located in the World Financial Center adjacent to Ground Zero.

As the event came to a close, the audience unanimously agreed with the critique published in the *Pittsburgh Post*

Gazette of McPherson's latest exhibition, *Steel: Pittsburgh Drawings* by Craig McPherson, at the Frick Art Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during May of last year: "McPherson's range of tone — articulating snow and steam, shadow and smoke with equal dexterity and definition — comes from a mastery of technique, a respect for craftsmanship, and, mostly, an act of will. They are, upon examination, unbelievably exquisite."

The subject of steel production had been his main interest for the past five years. "There is something mythic in scale and atmosphere about it all. There are a wealth of images for someone with a fondness for gritty industrial scenes." Following his exhibition at the Frick Art Museum, McPherson was ready to return to creating mezzotint editions, and pleased that the Board of Directors chose a "gritty industrial scene" for our 18th commissioned print.



Artist Craig McPherson with the 2009 presentation print.

PHOTO BY HOWARD MANTEL

The members of the Print Club of New York are honored that our long-time friend and former member has created our 2009 commissioned print, *NY Water Tunnel*, a work of art we consider to be a labor of love, given the dedication required to produce such a large mezzotint edition of 200 prints for members plus artist's and printer's proofs.

McPherson's presentation was enhanced by the use of digital imagery. The flow of images was smooth and the colors were accurate. Even large canvases could be shown in their entirety, and details selected to be viewed separately. A small detail was used to illustrate how the velvety black areas of the mezzotint are supplemented with red pastel.

The use of digital technology will also modernize the manner of presentation at the sixteenth Artists' Showcase to be held on October 26th at 6 PM at the Society of Illustrators, 128 East 63rd Street, Manhattan. The events committee did not have to struggle this year with slides submitted by artists that did not reflect the quality of their original prints. And because the five artists selected to show their work will use a Power Point presentation, the colors will be true and the images will be sharp. Also, the change of venue to the Society of Illustrators for the highly popular and well-attended event will allow each artist sufficient space to display his or her work for members and their guests to view without the usual crush around the display tables.

Brief excerpts from each of the artist's statements about their work to be presented demonstrate the political, cultural and deeply introspective motivation from which their creativity emanates.

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Greg Lindquist, who is early in his career, explores landscape as a memorial. "They reveal as much about the culture in which they are made as the topography they depict. My recent body of work documents Brooklyn in transition. I have also become interested in expanding the idea of industrial decay to a global scope, exploring its relationship to globalization and utopian ideals of modernism. Furthermore, I am compelled that the decaying state of these physical structures reflects their economic uselessness. This is the Western notion of a globalized economy — as production has moved eastward through outsourcing, these spaces are without purpose."

Catalina Chervin, who has had an extensive international career, is introspective. "My work is a manner of thinking that involves the emotions. It is the most truthful part of my inner self. It is walking round the 'edge' of a universe that I can only find when I am working. It is an attempt to understand the graphic chaos which is my interlocutor when I first begin a dialogue with a blank sheet. It is a never ending quest."

Tomie Arai's work examines issues for their cultural identity. "I am especially interested in the relationship between art and history, and the role that memory plays in the retelling of a collective past."

Yasuyo Tanaka states, "My desire to create art comes from my search for the meaning of our existence. I use my artwork as a tool to understand others and myself."

Catherine Stack is also early in her career. She writes, "Skin is our largest organ: it absorbs, excretes, protects and is constantly regenerating. As a printmaker, I am interested in the meticulous matrix of lines that are engraved in the surface of our skin. I create etchings of these lines to construct a delicate framework that balances and supports the vulnerable structures I create. I use these structures to embody emotional responses to memories, human relationships and nostalgia."

We look forward to seeing you at our next event, where you will be able to purchase the work of the five artists selected to present and discuss their work at the sixteenth annual Artists' Showcase.

Recent Print Club Events

Artist Craig McPherson Introduces the 2009 Presentation Print

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

On Monday evening, September 21, Print Club members and their guests gathered in anticipation at The National Arts Club on Gramercy Square to see the 2009 presentation print, a mezzotint entitled *Water Tunnel* by renowned artist Craig McPherson, unveiled to the public. The artist was thrilled to receive the Club's commission saying, "I have been waiting for years to make this print. The image and related research grew out of a commission by the MBIA company which re-insures large public projects of this sort. Going down a 750 foot shaft into a miles long tunnel was a memorable experience."

Print Club President Leonard Moss welcomed the standing-room only crowd who had come to see the unveiling of the club's 18th commissioned print. Renowned not only as a master of the mezzotint medium, but also as a painter and muralist, McPherson has received a number of important corporate commissions and is represented in museums around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The British Museum, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Art Institute of Chicago and other institutions "too numerous to mention." McPherson's first retrospective exhibit was at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, U.K. in 1998. His most recent show, "Steel: Pittsburgh Drawings by Craig McPherson," was at Pittsburgh's Frick Museum in May of 2008. Dr. Moss told those assembled that our print, *Water Tunnel*, depicts a section of the new water tunnel being constructed under Forest Hills in Queens. The artist was lowered into a chamber where he spent several memorable hours with the "sand hogs" working on the project. He then turned



Past presentation print artist Will Barnet admiring *Water Tunnel* at the National Arts Club.

PHOTO BY HOWARD MANTEL.

the podium over to Craig McPherson, who began his presentation, which he titled "Road Work: 1969-2009."

The artist explained that he was 20 years old in 1969 and attending the University of Kansas — the twelfth school he'd enrolled at in sixteen years. He was fortunate to meet two New Yorkers who had established a gallery in Wichita. They bought all his work, gave him a small stipend and took him to Mexico, his first trip outside the United States. This launched his career.

In the early 1970s he worked briefly as an arts administrator, directing the Michigan Art Train. He showed a watercolor of a copper mine done during that period, a harbinger of industrial subjects to come. Shortly, he moved to New York City and took up studio space on

Upcoming Print Club Events

Monday, October 26, 6 – 8 pm

The Annual Artists' Showcase, to be held at the Society of Illustrators, 128 East 63rd Street, New York, NY.

Saturday, November 7, 10 am

Members of the Print Club of New York are invited to join with members of other print collecting groups from across the country and Canada for the Annual "Print Week Breakfast" hosted by the International Print Center New York, 526 West 26th Street, Room 824, New York, NY (212) 989-5090.

Tuesday, November 17, 6 pm

Visit the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop at the Elizabeth Foundation for a tour and demonstration, 323 West 39th Street, 11th floor, New York, NY.

Also of interest to Print Club members:

September 12 – October 18, 2009

Martin Puryear: A Survey of Prints, curated by Phyllis Gilbert, Kleinert/James Art Gallery, 34 Tinker Street, Woodstock, NY www.woodstock-guild.org.

September 24 – November 7, 2009

Creative Dialogues: Latin American Printmakers, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Mathews Park, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT (203) 899-7999 or www.contemprints.org.

October 16 – November 12, 2009

Joseph Haske: Paintings to Prints, VanDeb Editions, 313 West 37th Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY (212) 564-5553 or www.vandeb.com.

November 5 – 8, 2009

IFPDA Print Fair, Park Avenue Armory, Park Avenue at 67th Street, New York. For information call (212) 674-6095 or see www.ifpda.org.

December 2 – 6, 2009

INK Miami Art Fair, Suites of Dorchester Hotel, 1850 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. For details see www.inkartfair.com.

December 3 – January 16, 2010

Exhibition of the work of 2009 International Artists-in Residence, Alicia Candiani from Argentina and Sandra Ramos of Cuba, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Mathews Park, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT (203) 899-7999 or www.contemprints.org.

January 28 – March 6, 2010

2010 Members' Show: Echo: Repetitive Marks and Images, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Mathews Park, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT (203) 899-7999 or www.contemprints.org.

168th Street on the top floor of an old ice factory — the highest building on high ground in Manhattan. This resulted in numerous cityscapes. He constructed a perspective drawing device of the type used in the Sixteenth Century by artists like Albrecht Dürer to assist with this work. One large, 48" x 54" example, now in the Museum of the City of New York, was his first museum acquisition, donated by the Academy of Arts and Letters at the urging of artist Raphael Soyer, who had seen great potential in the young artist's work. Another work from this time period, *Big Snow*, a 7' square now in the Whitney Museum, was painted on an old, wrinkled canvas given to the artist by a friend. The paint more or less holds the canvas together. *February Night* shows street life in New York as observed from McPherson's studio balcony. Chop shops and heroin factories were the two "businesses" in the neighborhood in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He also overlooked a park where a homeless man was living in a box. The artist painted him and the fire he built in an oil drum to warm himself.

McPherson happened upon the mezzotint medium in the late 1970s. He could not afford a rocker to prepare his plates, but he purchased a roulette. He explained that the mezzotint process was invented in 1642 and that the roulette came first, the rocker being invented about 30 or 40 years later. These tools are used to roughen the plate so that it will hold ink and print black. Two other tools, a scraper and a burnisher, are used to smooth out areas to produce highlights. McPherson's first serious mezzotint was of Fort Tryon Park. He showed us two versions of the print to demonstrate how different wipings of the plate created two quite different prints. He then showed a print of Yankee Stadium. The plate took over 1,000 hours to prepare using a #100 rocker. He rocked three hours a day, seven days a week for the better part of a year to create this finely textured plate. He then showed us *Girders*, a 24" x 36" mezzotint in which he used a #85 rocker (this plate took only nine months to rock!) for a grainier effect. The artist's prints tend to grow out of his paintings, which he has come to see as "preparatory." Some rejected proofs become the basis for pastels.

His growing renown as a painter of cityscapes won him his first commission from American Express. The result was his *Twilight* series, focused on the waterways and bridges of New York. American Express gave him two corner offices to work from after hours. The resulting canvases are about six or seven feet long. About this time, in the late 1980s, he moved from using his homemade perspective device to utilizing a surveyor's theodolite as a tool for making perspective drawings. He showed us several examples, including a series of drawings of Venice for his second project with American Express, his murals of harbor cities of the world that grace the lobby of their building in the World Financial Center of Lower Manhattan. The company supported him while he spent two to three months in each of six cities around the globe. The resulting panels, such as that depicting Venice, are 42' long and weigh between 1,500 and 1,800 pounds. The north walls feature two Northern Hemisphere cities—New York and Venice. The water line is the same in both panels, uniting them, and the campaniles of the old world city anticipate the skyscrapers of the new. Both New York

and Venice are depicted on an early spring morning. Istanbul, a large three-part painting, is shown mid-morning in the summertime, with Sydney and Rio de Janeiro, which cover the south facing walls, being shown in late afternoon light. Hong Kong, the final port depicted and the only section not available for public viewing due to security constraints, is a huge night scene. In total, he created 318 running feet of 11' high painting. He spent five years between 1987 and 1992 working on the project, which fortunately survived the horrors of 9/11 intact.

Following completion of the harbor cities project, American Express gave the artist and his wife a trip to anywhere in the world they wanted to go; they chose Kyoto, Japan. A 50' pastel on sanded paper of rippling water was the finale of his travel-inspired projects. He returned to New York City subjects—mezzotints of the FDR drive, a series based on the theatre, often featuring empty interiors and unusual vantage points. He also did an incredible series of pencil drawings of the steel industry in Pittsburgh. He showed a drawing of the Edgar Thomson Steel Works in Braddock, PA — Andrew

Carnegie's first mill for making Bessemer steel and one of the very few still in operation in the Pittsburgh area. This was among the work exhibited last year at the city's Frick Museum. McPherson indicated that he will be working almost exclusively in mezzotint for the next four to five years as he plans for a major exhibition.

Our Club's print, *Water Tunnel*, was derived from a large, 7' x 10' painting of the same subject that graces MBIA's corporate headquarters in Armonk, NY. McPherson said that the same equipment used to dig the Chunnel is being used in New York City for this project that has been going on for some twenty years, and which has at least fifteen more years to go. It is the largest public works project in the United States. It took him five weeks to rock the plate with a #85 rocker, six weeks to create the drawing and three months to edition the print. He does all the work himself on his mezzotints in order to control every detail of the process. As Craig McPherson completed his fascinating presentation, the large audience erupted in applause, thrilled to have gained such in-depth knowledge of this remarkable artist and his working methods.

A Visit With Craig McPherson

Julian Hyman

It was great to be the guest of Craig McPherson and his wife May this past summer. They live in a beautiful area in the Shenandoah Valley. Craig's studio is a large one, with a wonderful view of the landscape. During our stay, he was busy printing our Club's 2009 presentation print, which he was doing with great care. As each print came off the press, he scanned it with his eyes and made any minor corrections as needed. He told us he was trying to print at least nine prints each day.

From observing him at work, we learned that this is a considerable physical effort. The McPherson home is lovely and spacious and has many of his paintings and prints hung so that we could enjoy them.

May took us on a tour of other small towns in the valley and also to a deep cavern that was spectacular with its many beautiful formations created by nature over the millennia. It was hard for Mimi Siegel and me to take leave of the McPhersons and their beautiful home, and it was exciting to see the Print Club's commissioned print being pulled by the artist in his studio.

Past Artists' Showcase Participants

1994

Werner Hoeflich and Caroline Gallois (works by the artists shown by PCNY member Michael Dym), Alexis Rockman and Guillermo Kuitca (shown by Norman Dubrow), Bill Murphy, Ron Adams, Joan Busing and Jody Forster (shown by Morley Melden) and Ward Davenny and Sherman Drexler (shown by Julian Hyman)

1995

Emily Trueblood, Richard Haas, Arkady Levov, Richard Pantell, Kathleen McKenzie, David Schor and Arthur Werger

1996

Richard Sloat, Bill Behnken, Santi Moix, Alexander Zakharov, Debra Pearlman and Michael Whitaker Arike

1997

Lynne Allen, Sarah Brayer (represented by Allison Tolman), Margrit Lewczuk, Pamela Moore and Sergei Tsvetkov

1998

Gary Jurysta, James Pernotto, Merle Perlmutter, Carson Fox and Masaaki Noda

1999

Felix Plaza, Karen Brussat Butler, Naomi Silverman, Adam Pitt and Pavel Ouporov

2000

Daniel Hauben, Shelley Haven, Lucian Mihaesteanu, Lynn Margileth, Florence Neal and Louis Spitalnik

2001

Michael Di Cerbo, Lisbeth Firmin, Nicholas Howey, Mary Prince and Karen Whitman

2002

Zana Briskie, Bryan Nash Gill, Peter Kitchell, Nancy Lasar and Christopher Shore

2003

Mildred Beltre, Christopher Clarke, Daniel Heyman, Robert Hricko and Betty Winkler

2004

Seymour Kleinberg, Judy Mensch, Bill Murphy, Marilyn Silberstang and Charlotte Yudis

2005

John Dorish, Andy Hoogenboom, Selva Sangines, Charlene Tarbox and Scott Parker

2006

Gwooon Kim, Bernard Zalon, Justin Sanz, Brian Knoerzer and Chunwoo Nam

2007

Walter Buttrick, Jacques Moiroud, Tomomi Ono, Jason Stewart and Eve Stockton

2008

Flavia Bacarella, Lynn Butler, Jane Cooper, Tenjin Ikeda and Ellen Nathan Singer

Exhibition Reviews

“Will Barnet: Printmaker,” The Old Print Shop, May 1 – 29, 2009

Maryanne Garbowsky

It is especially appropriate for the Old Print Shop to honor master printmaker Will Barnet with a solo exhibition, not only because they represent him, but also to celebrate his recently published *catalogue raisonné*. The catalogue, which covers more than 70 years of Mr. Barnet’s work, marks a milestone in his career. While the catalogue presents 223 prints done between 1931 and 2005, the show had 23 prints by the artist, including some of the finest examples of his work.

One of my favorites was published by the Print Club of New York as the club’s 1998 presentation print. Entitled *Between Life and Life*, the lithograph is based on a poem by Emily Dickinson:

Between the form of Life and Life
The difference is as big
As Liquor at the Lip between
And Liquor in the Jug
The latter—excellent to keep—
But for ecstatic need
The corkless is superior—
I know for I have tried. (J 1101)

This deceptively simple poem reveals the poet’s taste for life and her joy in living. Mr. Barnet interprets the sense of *joie de vivre* in his image of the poet, who looks at her likeness reflected in the mirror and holds her glass high in a toast to life.

There are other prints in the show that recall the poet. *Woman by the Sea*, a color lithograph done in 1973, and *Dawn*, another color lithograph done in 1975, resonate with the loneliness and withdrawal of this reclusive writer. The prints are haunting in their imagery: like *Between Life and Life*, we see the back of a female figure; however, in the latter two, the figures gaze out at the expansive sea in anticipation of what is to come.

Family reminiscences as well as family members are frequently incorporated into the artist’s work. Two of my

favorites deal with children. *The Walk*, a color lithograph done in 2001, is whimsical in its depiction of a cat as large as the young boy holding it. The cat’s long black tail trails down in a graceful “C” to the boy’s feet. The cat, rigid in his posture, is undoubtedly planning his escape. Another young boy, wrapped against the winter chill in a gray muffler, pulls his cat on *The Sled* (2002): both boy and cat stare intently out of the picture plane at the view beyond. Not only family members but cats, undoubtedly family pets, are represented in Mr. Barnet’s prints. In *Woman and White Cat*, a color serigraph done in 1971, we see the facial features of Mr. Barnet’s lovely wife Elena as she holds and comforts a cat. In *Woman and Cats*, a color lithograph done in 1969, the black cats—one resting, the other in the arms of the reclining woman—are interwoven into a lyrical dance of lines that curve and repeat, flow and fold into and upon themselves. There is a sense of beauty as well as peace in the harmony of form and movement. *Dialogue in Green* repeats several motifs already seen: the back of a woman figure and a resting cat. What is different about this color lithograph done in 1970 is the fusion of figurative representation and abstract geometric pattern. The woman, clothed in a green robe or kimono, sits atop a predominantly red rug with square and diamond shapes. Her white hand, the only white of her body shown, leads our vision to the upper right where the white of her hand is repeated in the white of the black cat’s eyes. The effect is mesmerizing; the mood is serene. The magic of Will Barnet’s work is clearly felt.

The exhibition was well worth seeing. The prints are for sale, information provided on the Old Print Shop’s website (www.oldprintshop.com). But I would be remiss not to mention the recently published *catalogue raisonné*, which the Old Print Shop also offers. If you liked the smaller exhibition provided here, you will certainly enjoy the other 200 prints depicted in the catalogue. Over a period of 74 years, Mr. Barnet has maintained a quality of expertise that has neither lessened nor waned. The variety of subjects and styles is matched by the variety of printing techniques he has mastered, taught, and developed over the years. The only reaction one can have when viewing the catalogue is “What a career! What a lifetime of accomplishment!” It is an impressive reminder of what a consummate artist Will Barnet truly is.

"Blanche Lazzell: White-line Color Woodcuts," Craig F. Starr Gallery, June 5 – August 14, 2009

Maryanne Garbowsky

Visitors who passed the Provincetown wharf studio of Blanche Lazzell remarked on its careful tending. It was a reflection of the artist and her world, one passerby noting, "One need not more than to pass her house to sense the joy and love of the person who lives within" (Acton 186). Welcome to Blanche Lazzell's world. Her garden and her printmaking were her two "cherished activities" (Acton 185).

A painter as well as a printmaker, she was an innovative member of a group that gathered after World War I in Provincetown where she worked, exhibited, and sold her art. Her distinctive white-line woodblock prints bear the stamp of her ingenuity and originality. Her artistic background, where and with whom she studied and how she worked, make for an interesting narrative that helps one to better understand her contribution to American modernism.

Blanche Lazzell was an eager student, always interested in acquiring more skill and refining her talent and techniques. She was a lifelong learner. From her Bachelor of Arts' degree in fine arts from West Virginia University through her studies in New York City with William Merritt Chase to her travels to Paris and her work at the Academie Moderne with Fauvist painters like Albert Marquet, and with Albert Gleizes, a Cubist, to Provincetown and her classes with Charles Hawthorne and printmaker Oliver Chaffee, to her work with Hans Hofmann in 1937 at 59, Blanche was always in pursuit of learning more. Yet despite all her studies and exposure to other artists and their ideas, it was what she did with her education that made her work uniquely her own. "To use all this for *my own expression*. That counts above all. It will be *my own or nothing*" (Brooke 218). Her method of working, her subjects, and her use of color all bore her distinctive mark.

According to David Acton, who chronicled her work in Provincetown, "Lazzell's reputation as an artist rests largely on her achievements as a printmaker" (169). Thus the timely exhibition at Craig F. Starr Gallery in Manhattan was especially welcome since its focus is on her white-line color woodblock prints. In all, there were eleven prints along with five woodblocks which "are art objects in their own right" (Smith). The show demonstrated the innovation and expertise of Lazzell, whom the reviewer called "one of the unsung geniuses of early American Modernism" (Smith).

Her method of working was something she gleaned from several artists, one of whom was Oliver N. Chaffee, Jr., an artist she worked with at Provincetown. He "taught her the single-block, white-line woodcut technique" that she adopted and made her own (Acton 177). It was a technique also credited to B.J.O. Nordfeldt who "One day . . . surprised the others by exhibiting one block . . . with his complete design on that . . ." (Acton 175-6). The process allows for a single block, rather than several, and the

white line between the design permits different colors to be applied at the same time rather than on different blocks. It offers the artist great flexibility in varying each print using different colors. Each print is unique, almost like a monotype. Lazzell herself commented on the process saying, "Each print has its own demands to get the desired effect. I use perfect freedom and do as I please and feel" (Acton 179).

Lazzell first drew her design on tracing paper before placing it on the block, laying "the drawing face down on a block of clear pine, calculating its placement so that most of the lines ran parallel to the wood grain" (Acton 179). After transferring the design, she "carved the lines in the soft pine using a straight bladed knife or a v-shaped gouge" (Acton 179). Lazzell believed in the value of her work and proclaimed, "The woodblock print has the same rank in art as any other medium or form of expression" (Acton 180). The prints are not, she insisted, "pot boilers!" coming off the block in hundreds as some people imagine (Acton 180).

Her colors, too, were distinctly her own. While Nordfeldt sought a softer, translucent effect, she liked bolder, brighter colors like the Fauves with whom she studied. Showing a preference for French watercolors, she used them "straight from the tube" and applied them over and over again to achieve a "rich and intense" effect (Acton 179,180). The white lines, which appear in the prints, are the results of the separation between the component parts of the design, which would not be inked and printed when the "loaded" woodblock would be printed. Lazzell "seldom did more than one impression at a time" although she "printed about four impressions from each woodcut altogether, each in different hues and tonal variations" (Acton 180).

The exhibition at Craig F. Starr Gallery included prints of scenes from the artist's home state of West Virginia, along with the summer scene at Provincetown where she vacationed for fifty years (Severens). There she was an integral part of a vibrant group of talented artists responsible for the distinct Provincetown print – the white-line color woodcut for which she is best known.

Among these prints was the *West Virginia Coal Works* (1949), a colorful, Cubist expression of bold oranges and blues. The viewer's eyes are drawn into the print by a path that leads from the bottom left to the middle right where it turns and is met by a two-toned black/gray rectangle atop which sits the scaffolded structure of the coal works. On the right is a bare, brown tree, which adds a touch of nature, repeated on the left side by the gray bones of a tree encased in a rectilinear shape of brown/gray tones. Dramatically crossing the path is a blue river that holds the right side of the print down in a polygonal shape. The alternating shapes provide a counterpoint for the stability of the building within this natural setting. Like Wallace Stevens' "The Anecdote of the Jar," the coal works:

. . . took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

The Town Home (1928) is lighter in color and looks like a pastel. The gentle sweep of the distant hills implies a subdued energy, which continues in the curving contours of the trees in front of them. The trees, once again bare, move in a graceful, natural dance. The rooftops of the houses below the hills hold firm in faceted shapes and colors, and like the Cubist painters with whom she studied, offer multiple views of the subject. They command our attention and anchor the scene so it doesn't slip away like some dream.

One of my favorites is *The Red Scow* (1931) where the vertical mast of the boat bisects the print and is reiterated by the enormous bare branches of a tree to the left, and then echoed on the right by the chimneys and houses' windows. The colors are pale, except for the reds, oranges and yellows of the hills. They are set at an angle and provide a counterpoint to the otherwise verticality of the print. The reds and oranges leap out at the viewer against the pale sky, making a dramatic and bold statement of the Provincetown wharf scene. Lazzell described "the colorful spirit" of the village and summed up its influence on the artists: "Creative energy was in the air we breathed" (Acton 174).

In addition to West Virginia landscapes and Provincetown scenes, there are a number of flower prints, one of my favorites being *Abstract Petunias* (1946). Without the title, it would be difficult to identify the flower. The print resembles a colorful jigsaw puzzle and is a vortex of swirling energy. The flowers are flattened in hues of pink, maroon, and violet, while the leaves are blocks of green without any attempt to delineate them as a realist would – leaf by leaf. The viewer's eyes are drawn into this whirling mass of color, shape and form. Lazzell studied with Fernand Leger and Albert Gleizes in the 1920s and described abstract art as "made up of tones and planes or shapes of color. These shapes must be so related as to give harmony and rhythm" (Severens). In this print, harmony and rhythm dominate.

There is one more print that demands mention. It is one of Lazzell's most outstanding prints – *The Monongahela*, done in 1936, which Roberta Smith describes in her review as "one especially inspired progression of blues" (C27). This image of the river she knew and loved was showcased at the Detroit Institute of Arts in a "landmark exhibition of American color woodcut" (Acton 184). It is an image Lazzell printed for many years because of its beauty and popularity. The design spirals from left to right with a carousel rhythm. The branches of the tree on the bottom right start a graceful swing to the right, while on the left, we follow the natural curve of the river as it bends beyond the picture frame. The sloping hills in the background repeat the curving lines in the uppermost part and are echoed by the bridge and its scalloped arches. All of this concludes in the circular design of the river as it flows to the left past houses with roofs that have their own repeated form, only to begin to go around again. The print is a delightful spin on a modernist merry-go-round, rotating before our eyes.

It has been seven years since the exhibition of *From Paris to Provincetown: Blanche Lazzell and the Color Woodcut* at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (January 23, 2002 - April 29, 2002). Thanks to Craig F. Starr Gallery for

reminding us of the beauty and grace of Lazzell's woodcuts and for focusing attention on this important chapter in the development of American Modernist prints. Hopefully this will be just an appetizer to future shows and exhibitions, so that the work of this significant artist and period emerge more fully into the light.

Bibliography

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"James Ensor: A Man Ahead of his Time," Museum of Modern Art, June 28 – September 21, 2009

Maryanne Garbowsky

"Belgian artist, James, painter of masks," the crossword clue read. Of course, the answer is Ensor. It is precisely this narrow perspective that curator Anna Swinbourne sought to dispel in the Museum of Modern Art's Ensor retrospective, which opened at the end of June. "I was so tired of this limited, stereotyped context for him," she said (Spears). The exhibition, which runs through September 21st, clearly demonstrates the wide ranging talents and abilities of this artist, who has been described as "a man ahead of his time" (Janssens 5).

In fact, the word that best describes his work is "diversity" — diversity of subject matter, of style, media, and vision. Difficult to pin down, he is an artist whose range is extensive, whose output is prodigious. Equally at home in painting, drawing, and printmaking, Ensor displays a variety and depth that is staggering. His content is striking. Called a precursor of "Surrealists and German Expressionists" (Spears), Ensor rattles the mind, the psyche, and the soul. According to Holland Cotter in his *New York Times* review, he is "an artist's-artist" (C25).

Anna Swinbourne explains how the present show came to be: "There was a tremendous outcry" from "contemporary artists" after "'Between Street and Mirror: The Drawings of James Ensor' at the Drawing Center in Soho" in 2001 (Spears). MOMA's current exhibition allowed her the opportunity to showcase Ensor's many talents and broad range. Contemporary artist Terry Winters sums up

the artist by stating that “Everything he touched, he transformed into something remarkable” (Spears).

While much attention has been paid to his paintings and drawings, little notice has been given to his prints, which make up a quarter of this exhibition. It is interesting to note that “the catalogue of his etchings and dry-points . . . contain no less than a hundred and thirty-three entries” (plus . . . thirty-two lithographs) (Janssens 60), once again demonstrating the range of his abilities. In his monograph on James Ensor, Jacques Janssens states that “his engravings alone would be enough to establish his reputation” (60).

The MOMA retrospective covers the most productive period of the artist’s life, twenty years known as “his prolific, and combative, golden period” (Spears). After this period, his inspirational fervor and intense drive wane, leaving his work repetitive and stale. Ironically, it is precisely at this time that he is “discovered,” his fame and renown growing, and awards and accolades given to him. Before that, he was tormented, belittled, or simply ignored, thus calling forth his “combative” energies.

Within the group of etchings included in the show, there are scenes of his beloved Ostend, Belgium where he was born and lived for most of his life. These scenes include *The Cathedral*, done in 1886, and *The Bathers at Ostend* (1899). Ensor was particularly adept at the depiction of crowds, which appear in both of these etchings. Whereas the former shows less individuality among the crowd but concentrates on the church’s façade, the latter includes more realistic detail on the faces and figures of the bathers. There are also portraits, one of Ernest Rousseau, a drypoint done in 1887. Ensor lived with the Rousseau family in Brussels, finding the support and encouragement he so needed but lacked in his own home and native town.

Self-portraits, a genre in which Ensor excelled in all media, are also included among the prints. Along with portraits like *My Portrait in 1960* (sic) done in 1888 and *My Skeletonized Portrait*, States I and II done in 1889, there is one that leaps out in its boldness – *The Pisser* (1887). Reminiscent of a Rembrandt print – not a self portrait, however — this etching shows Ensor from the back “urinating against a public wall on which is scrawled ‘Ensor est un fou’ — Ensor is a crazy man” (Cotter C25).

Other prints that arrest the viewer are ones like *Devils Thrashing Angels and Archangels* (1888). Similar to the work of Bosch, the details in this etching are captivating: the foes are engaged in a battle that no doubt ensued in the brain of the artist. Although an etching of this subject—*Demons Teasing Me*—is not included in this exhibition, there is a drawing of the subject done in the same year. In this drawing the artist sits in the center of the picture looking glassy-eyed and strained while surreal shapes and bestial figures, some hooded, others with large elfin ears, surround him. In both prints and drawing, these spirits/devils torment and overwhelm their forlorn victim.

But one of the most striking etchings is *Hop-Frog’s Revenge*, done in 1898. Based on a short story by Edgar Allan Poe entitled “Hop-Frog,” Ensor visualizes the climactic scene of the narrative when Hop-Frog, a dwarf court jester who has been abused and victimized by the king and his seven cohorts, exacts his revenge.

Encouraging the king and his ministers to dress as orangutans for the court masquerade ball, he pulls them up above the floor on a chain that usually held a chandelier. The onlookers, as well as the king and his ministers, thoroughly enjoy this prank and are “convulsed with laughter” (Poe 303). However, Hop-Frog descends from the chain above them with a lit torch, which he “thrust . . . down towards them” (303), turning the scene from amusing to disastrous. The costumes of the men, made of flax and held fast to their clothes with tar, “burst into a sheet of vivid flame” (Poe 304): “In less than half a minute the whole eight ourang-outangs were blazing fiercely, amid the shrieks of the multitude who gazed at them from below, horror stricken . . .” (Poe 304). The moment Ensor chooses to depict portrays a “maniacal” Hop-Frog — torch in hand — setting the eight afire (Poe 304).

Amidst the crowd, there is one particular masquerader looking on. He wears a banner with the name ENSOR written in capital letters. One wonders if this scene of revenge was not Ensor’s own against all those who laughed at and mocked him. “In reality, hurt by his failures, he was discouraged and distressed. Scornful, sarcastic, unfathomable, he put a mask over his own visage so that what he felt could not be seen” (Janssens 75). Although we cannot definitely identify Ensor with this onlooker, it is certainly possible that the artist projects himself into the role of Hop-Frog demanding justice for the countless insults and abuses he suffered. Like Hop-Frog, Ensor might have wanted to say: “I am simply Hop-Frog, the jester — and *this is my last jest*” (Poe 304).

Ensor’s use of masks is especially compelling. Despite Anna Swinbourne’s concern that the artist’s reputation is limited by this association, masks have a special significance for the artist. Ensor’s studio was above his parents’ shop, which had an abundant supply of masks. These papier-mâché masks were big sellers, especially during the carnival season. Enthralled by them, Ensor took them upstairs to his studio where he used them in his work. According to Janssens, the masks are “troubling and ferocious” (44). One may wonder what effect they had on Ensor. What was his motive in using them? “Are we looking at humanity disguised and cryptic, hovering on the border between dream and reality, or are we really seeing a parade of masquerading specters . . . (Janssens 44,57) “Why masks . . . ? (57).

This question is visualized in an etching entitled *Perplexed Masks* (1904) in which Ensor himself appears distinctively in top hat and black cape, surrounded by masked figures (as he was earlier by demons). So, too, in *The Deadly Sins Dominated by Death* (1904), we see masked figures with Death represented by a skeleton head with wings.

This unreal — “surreal” — world, a “phantasmagoria of carnival masks and skeletons that look as if they have escaped from some ‘danse macabre’ of the Middle Ages” (Janssens 7) appeals to our modern age. It is this element of his work that earns him the title “fantasist” (Cotter C23). This facet of Ensor “signals the birth of psychiatry, of analysis, and the exploration of the mind” (Spears 26) to contemporary artist Tony Oursler. Barbara Hoffman subtitles her review of the exhibition, “James Ensor’s dark art” and describes his fascination with the macabre as “his golden ticket to Expressionism” (50).

When we enter the world of James Ensor, we have entered a Halloween night of tricks and treats: the talent, the diversity, the intensity elicit our praise. These are the treats. On the other hand, the irony, the mystery, the rage and madness, the views from within and without are the tricks, and they leave us breathless. MOMA's retrospective is not to be missed, but be prepared.

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Oskar Kokoschka at the Neue Galerie, July 16 – October 5, 2009

Fran Alexander

Do not be deterred by the high placement of Oskar Kokoschka's early oil portraits at the Neue Galerie, nor the low lighting of his works on paper, for here in this small show running through October 5th we are treated to a fairly instructive exhibition of the artist's early Expressionist work. Coming out of the pre-Expressionist Jugendstil (Style of Youth) movement after studying at Vienna's School of Applied Arts and then joining the Vienna Workshops, Kokoschka was looking for something beyond the two dimensional decorative design of fans, postcards and posters. He was more interested in depicting inner life than surface beauty, which of course was in the air at the time in Vienna, where Sigmund Freud was developing his theories of psychological truth. When Kokoschka's unique approach to portraiture first came onto the scene at the 1908 Vienna International Kunstschau, his asymmetrical faces, green-ging flesh and bony expressive hands won him the title of "enfant terrible." But Gustav Klimt, father of Austrian Art Nouveau and president of the Vienna Secession, who was a great influence on the young artist, recognized him as "the outstanding talent among the younger generation." And the already famous and well connected architect Adolf Loos became his mentor, despite all the outrage prompted by Kokoschka's unlovely but revealing vision. Loos grasped and appreciated what the artist was doing and encouraged him to break out on his own, offering to refer his clients as models for him and promising to buy his paintings if they refused them.

The show's eight early oil "nervously disordered portraits," as Kokoschka himself labeled them, dating between 1909 and 1914, demonstrate the emphasis on gesture and psychological tension that would contribute to modern portraiture. He wrote in his 1971 autobiography that his objective in portraiture was "to intuit from the face, from its play of expressions, and from gestures, the

truth about a particular person, and to recreate in my own pictorial language the distillation of a living being that would survive in my memory." His interest in portraying hands in particular may have benefited from his study of anatomy; in fact, at times his hands look almost like x-ray images, in keeping with his search for the interior life of his subjects. (Interestingly, the psychology of hands was an area of study at that time as well; a 1909 article in the *New York Times* reported that slender hands with long fingers and short palms signify a high order of intellect and an artistic tendency!)

Here we meet the faces and hands of intellectual leaders, art historians, industrialists and their wives, writers, and aesthetes of Loos's and Kokoschka's circle. Many of these paintings were considered unfinished at the time, because of the sparingly applied paint in parts of the canvases. *Martha Hirsch (Dreaming Woman)*, wife of factory owner Wilhelm, whose companion portrait, not included here, Kokoschka painted in similar colors but notably with far more developed hands. Martha stares absently from the canvas with her enormous eyes, referred to as "bovine eyes" by one reviewer, emerging hauntingly from a thin background wash save for a dark blue aura around her face. Her tiny, delicate hands are crossed at her waist, palms open in a Buddha-like position. As an early portrait, this 1909 painting of the twenty-two year old woman still bears the anatomical features of the artist's young girl studies from his Jugendstil period, but the face is painted in the style that would become the foundation of his "soul painting."

Peter Altenberg, a Bohemian writer and Viennese coffee-house habitué (where he was known to receive his mail), is also depicted against a faded background, except for his head, which is encircled by a similar dark blue aura. He seems to have been captured in mid-gesture, talking with his foreshortened hands and quizzical eyes, as does *Rudolf Blumner* (1910), actor, author and advocate of the Expressionist periodical *Der Sturm*, and utopian novelist *Paul Scheerbart* (1910).

Two young married art historians, *Hans Tietze and Erica Tietze-Conrat*, are seemingly engaged in a silent dialogue of hands, Erica looking out to us in full face while Hans is shown in profile. Kokoschka referred to this painting as his "symbol of married life." As with the *Hirsches*, the husband's hands again are far more developed than the wife's, here almost recalling the gesture of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel *Creation of Adam*, his blood-red left hand reaching across the center of the canvas, almost touching the much smaller, less expressive hand of his wife. One can't help but wonder, does this reflect Kokoschka's perception of couples' power roles? This 1909 painting shows the beginning of his trademark swirling, hatched backgrounds, perhaps also speaking to inner turbulence as seen in *Ludwig Ritter Von Janikowski* (1909). This former radical student turned civil servant and aesthete stares out from a menacingly dark and scratchy background, with a ghoulish face, during a mental hospital stay. The viewer can begin to see the development of Kokoschka's own "pictorial language" in these portraits, as it becomes evident that his subjects did not just sit for him, but rather went about their business as he observed and searched to capture their essence.

The show's forty works on paper hang in a far too dimly lit room behind Klimt's magnificent *Adele Bloch-Bauer (I)*, but are rewarding just the same in their lesson of Kokoschka's journey. Here we find among a roomful of drawings, watercolors and prints, two prime examples of his Jugendstil work. *The Girl Li and I* is the last of eight *Dreaming Youths* (1907-08) color lithographs, a series of illustrations accompanying his poem of the same title about the journey from childhood to young adulthood. This print was inspired by his fellow student at the School of Applied Arts, a Swedish artist named Lilith (Li), and is dedicated to Klimt. It depicts the two young artists standing in a typically flat, sharp-edged and primary-colored, decorative Eden-like setting. His work with adolescent models is evidenced here by the elongated, pre-pubescent anatomy, as also seen in some accompanying *Young Girl* studies. A poster from the same period, done for the Kunstschau Vienna, entitled *Cotton Picker, Acrobat's Daughter*, shows another young girl, this time in profile, among black and white block-like cotton bolls that mimic the lettering above and below. (A circus family lived near by the school and often made money modeling for art students in the winter.)

Kokoschka would continue to play with frontal and profile poses, as he did in his Tietze painting, in his even more raw and immediate line portraits of more of his contemporaries. In his 1912 drawing of *Karl Kraus II* (co-founder of *Der Sturm*), Kokoschka depicted frontal and side views simultaneously, perhaps symbolizing the ambivalence between what is seen and what is actually there.

Perhaps most intriguing of all is the set of three lithographs in a row, all of the same woman, Camilla Swoboda (*The Concert*, 1921). At first glance, the viewer notices shifting, haunting moods in each print, and is pressed to wonder what lies behind these distant gazes (that we should now be used to in Kokoschka), and these pensive, somber and resigned expressions. The series immerses us in his process; we can see how the changes in an arched brow, position of hand, or downcast eye all contribute to capturing the sitter's mood. We are only told her name and numbers, however, with no explanation of what must surely be a story. Here is where more information, or at least access to the gallery's books, would have been particularly helpful. The woman was the wife of Viennese art historian Karl Maria Swoboda, who also performed piano concerts in his home. Kokoschka was invited there in the summer of 1920 and had already been exploring the power of music in his work, most notably so far in the *Power of Music* painting done in Dresden, 1918-20. The Swobodas knew he was fascinated with the profound effect of music upon listeners and invited him

to sketch their guests as they listened. He did over twenty drawings, which were originally probably intended as sketches for a larger composition. Viennese publisher Richard Lanyi reproduced ten portraits of Camilla as colotypes in a portfolio entitled *Variations of a theme*. The Berlin gallerist Paul Cassirer made lithographs of five of these portraits, which were published in the same year under the title *The Concert*. Notes on the specific music played to evoke the emotional states depicted in the *Variations* include reference to an early anonymous Italian piece, traditional Slovakian tunes, an aria from Gluck's *Iphigenie*, Debussy, and an aria from Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (see *Kokoschka and Music*, prepared by the Foundation of Oskar Kokoschka and the Musée Jenisch Vevey).

Although Kokoschka never played an instrument himself, he had a passion for music that started with his life changing visit to a performance of Mahler's *Tristan and Isolde* at the age of eight. Ironically, he would go on to have an affair with Mahler's widow, Alma, for several years starting at the young age of nineteen, an affair which tortured him in his work for many years to follow. Only one piece in the show makes reference to this relationship, a 1913 watercolor entitled *Alma Mahler and Artist (Christian Love)*, in which he walks outside with her as a child. She seems aloof as he tries to get her attention, but engaged with him in the background where they are both shown as older lovers, as he points out their younger selves to her. Alma Mahler was a formidable figure in their circle, having affairs with other prominent men and later remarrying to architect Walter Gropius.

Kokoschka wrote in his autobiography that he valued his friendships with contemporary musicians even more than those with his fellow writers and painters. He socialized with a great number of famous musicians throughout his life, and as a native Austrian was very proud of his country's musical heritage, often designing opera stage sets. At the age of eighty, he finally got himself a piano, on which his famous composer friends would play for him.

Finally, we come upon the one self-portrait in the exhibit, the 1912 poster for his lecture on the "Nature of Vision" at Vienna's Academic Music and Literature Society, where he famously spoke of his "soul painting." In this portrait, he borrows from Christian iconography with a gesture to his chest's bleeding wound as reference to his feeling rejected by the Viennese in his debut exhibitions of 1908-09. With a shaved head and skeletal face, again with an ambivalent profile/frontal view, he becomes the defiant outcast he has been labeled, "Super Savage."

The irony is not lost on the viewer that Kokoschka signed many of his works simply in his shorthand "OK."

Book Shelf

Kushner, Marilyn. *The Future Must Be Sweet: Lower East Side Printshop Celebrates 40 Years*. NY: Lower East Side Printshop, 2008.

Print Club members with an interest in contemporary prints will find the catalog celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Lower East Side Printshop a valuable addition to their libraries. Published to coincide with a major retrospective exhibition of Printshop "alumni" organized by the International Print Center New York, the catalog was authored by Print Club member Marilyn S. Kushner, Curator and Head, Department of Prints, Photographs and Architectural Collections at the New-York Historical Society. As Club members may recall from her informative talk at the Print Club's annual meeting in 2008, "Inked, Printed, Collected!: A History of Print Clubs in the United States," Dr. Kushner has extensively researched organizations that support printmaking and collecting.

The catalog begins with a brief history of the Lower East Side Printshop, which grew out of the collaborative mood of the 1960s—following in the footsteps of groundbreaking print workshops such as Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), founded in 1957, and the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, established in 1960. The LESP was founded in 1968 in New York City under the leadership of artist Eleanor Magid, who was concerned that children were not having an opportunity to make art during a series of school strikes taking place that year. After the strike ended, Magid kept her studio open for collaborative printmaking.

In 1971, having outgrown its founder's studio, the Printshop moved to East Fourth Street and initiated its popular "keyholder" program, allowing 24-hour access to shared communal presses. In 1975, they incorporated as a not-for-profit. The Printshop initially focused on providing workspace for members and on offering a variety of printmaking classes.

In the 1980s, the Printshop began a Minority Artists Workshop and began publishing prints under its Special Editions Program. Its focus on school children also remained a part of its mission, with an Art-in-Education program. A number of artists began producing posters for community organizations and other not-for-profit agencies at the Printshop under a program funded by the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Kiki Smith became a keyholder during the 80s, just as her career was taking off.

In 1992, as a result of the recession during the late 1980s and the Gulf War, the LESP was forced to curtail many of its activities and lay off staff. Only the keyholder and Art-in-Education programs remained; these were run by consultants. Fortunately, the hiatus was short-lived. By 2003, the Printshop was thriving again as the economy of New York City rebounded. Three full-time and one part-time position were staffed. In addition to the earlier programs, contract printing services were initiated, a lecture

series was inaugurated, and special holiday sales and benefit prints were introduced.

The space on East Fourth Street was no longer sufficient to house all the LESP programs. After an unsuccessful search for larger quarters in its own neighborhood, the Printshop moved in 2005 to its current quarters on West 37th Street, an area now home to numerous print establishments. The new space is five times that of the previous location. A Special Editions Resident Artists program was launched, and in-house exhibitions became possible. Increased support came from a variety of foundations, including the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Wolf Kahn and Emily Mason Foundation and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, among others. Kara Walker was among the first artists to work in the new space, creating a suite of prints entitled *Testimony*. Kushner ends the overview by noting that the LESP is, today, a "beehive of activity" that plays a vital role in the city's creative culture (23).

The remainder of the catalog is given over to illustration and discussion of the works in the exhibition, nearly all of which were published and produced by the LESP. Among the artists represented are: Mike Bidlo, Donald Tarantino, Clarissa Sligh, the Bullet Space collaborative, Juan Sánchez, Willie Birch, Kiki Smith, Amy Sillman and Jef Scharf, Glenn Ligon, Paul Chan, Dread Scott, Zana Briski, Ghada Amer, Joanne Greenbaum, Allison Smith, Jackie Battenfield, Amy Cutler, Carrie Moyer, Sheila Pepe, Theresa Chong, Kara Walker, Tomie Arai, Edward del Rosario, Angie Drakopoulos, Mary Temple, Jose Guinto, Matthew Day Jackson, Ryan McGinness, David Opdyke, William Villalongo, and Deborah Grant. Some of the work was done as part of a Publishing or Special Editions Residency; other work came out of the keyholder program. Works range from abstract to representational, with a significant number incorporating themes of social justice—a link back to the LESP's origin and roots. Media range from digital to screen printing to etching and photogravure. Many of the works include hand additions. All are given full-page, color reproductions.

Fredericks, Stephen A. *The New York Etching Club Minutes: November 12, 1877 through December 8, 1893*. Houston: Rice University Press, 2009.

Members of the Print Club of New York who had the good fortune to attend the Club's Annual Meeting last June were lucky enough to hear Club member Steve Fredericks talk about the labor of love that led to the publication (both in hard copy and as a "living" online document with links to archival sources) of this remarkable study (see *Print Club Newsletter* Spring 2009). Over a period of many years, Fredericks researched the archival records of the New York Etching Club, established in 1877, as well as documents relating to a variety of groups and print exhibitions in the last quarter of the 19th century. This book, which presents the material in an edited and annotated format, not only gives a detailed account of the activities of a group of dedicated New York

printmakers, many of whom achieved renown in the art world, but also puts their endeavors and organization into the larger context of the growth of interest in printmaking in late 19th century America.

In her Preface, Marilyn Kushner writes, "...this volume will become vital to anyone who seeks to broaden the window into late nineteenth-century American art and to help explicate issues of American art and culture at that time. American printmaking studies owes a note of thanks to Stephen Fredericks for making a contribution that will serve the field for years to come" (xi).

Fredericks presents the minutes in a typed version of their original handwritten form, taking care to preserve the original spellings (and misspellings), punctuation, annotations, etc. His book is richly illustrated with reproductions of many of the documents being discussed, as well as with numerous prints, many courtesy of Reba and Dave Williams' Print Research Foundation (see the Winter 2009 issue of *The Print Club Newsletter* for a story on the acquisition of this collection by the National Gallery of Art). Prints by Thomas Moran, Mary Nimmo Moran, John Twachtman, John Falconer, James Smillie, Henry Farrer and others are supplemented by photographs of all of the featured artists. This makes the book of special interest to collectors of 19th century American prints, who can follow the movements of artists affiliated with the New York Etching Club.

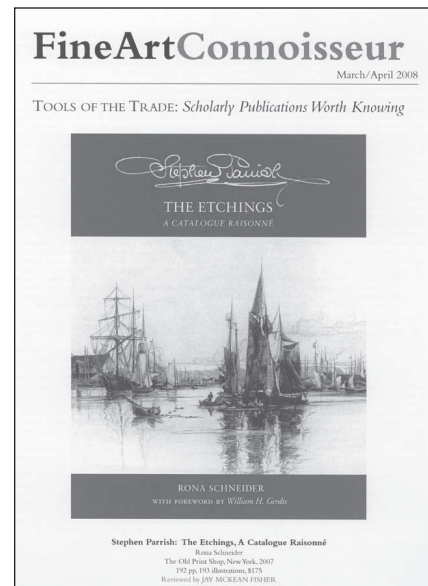
The first regular meeting of the Etching Club was held in the studio of James D. Smillie on Monday evening, November 12, 1877. The building where the meeting took place, at 337 Fourth Avenue, still stands and is illustrated in the text (3), as is the first etching made by the group, a small landscape with low buildings and wind-swept palm trees (3). The first president was Leroy M. Yale, and present at the first meeting were: Yale, Charles Miller, Louis C. Tiffany, Henry C. Eno, Samuel Colman, A. F. Bellows, Frederick Dielman, Walter Shirlaw, Henry Farrer, A. H. Baldwin, Charles S. Reinhart, Laurence Johnson and Smillie. After referring the drafting of the constitution to the Executive Committee, members showed and discussed their etchings (3).

The volume is organized chronologically, and each chapter includes notes about other important events in the print world that year. For example, the chapter focusing on 1890 also notes the founding that year of the American Society of Painters on Stone, dedicated to the publishing of lithographs (105). Many of the founders were also members of the Etching Club. The relationship between the Etching Club and the American Society of Painters in Water Colors was also a close one. The annual exhibits of the latter included a "Black and White Room" that featured works by many of the etchers (24). By 1880, Boston, Philadelphia and Cincinnati had followed New York's lead and established etching clubs of their own — thus showing the growing popularity of the medium.

Rice University Press's willingness to publish an online version of this important work, which can be explored on the University's "Connexions" website: <http://cnx.org/content/m19798/latest/>, is a boon to researchers as it means that the information contained within will register on search engines as scholars research the artists involved, print organizations and related top-

ics. "Hot links" within the text and notes take the reader to PDF files of original documents, available in their entirety. While this feature allows the online version to provide materials that could not be included in the book, it should not dissuade readers from purchasing a hard copy of this handsome publication, which should find a home on the desks or coffee tables of all lovers of American prints.

Fredericks, himself an accomplished etcher, includes a beautiful example of his own work on the dedication page of this volume.



Cover image, Rona Schneider's *Stephen Parrish: The Etchings, a Catalogue Raisonné*.

COURTESY OF FINE ART CONNOISSEUR.

Schneider, Rona. *Stephen Parrish: The Etchings, a Catalogue Raisonné*. New York: The Old Print Shop, 2007.

Stephen A. Fredericks

Friends and Colleagues — One of the country's preeminent print scholars — Rona Schneider — has recently published an exceptional *catalogue raisonné* of artist Stephen Parrish's etchings. Parrish, a member of the New York Etching Club during the late 19th Century, was a brilliant etcher and well-known painter in his day. Some of you may know of him as Maxfield Parrish's father, too. Schneider's book is an all-too-rare piece of genuine American etching scholarship and makes excellent reading.

I have read every word of this publication more than once and encourage you to consider it for yourself.

Regards,
Stephen A. Fredericks

Special Offer to Print Club Members, Print Makers and Collectors

Rona Schneider's historically important *catalogue raisonné* of 153 prints of Stephen Parrish (1846-1938) is being made available to people and institutions with a special interest in American prints and printmaking at the greatly reduced price of \$75.

The book was praised by Jay Mckean Fisher, Senior Print Curator of the Baltimore Museum of Art, in a review in *Fine Art Connoisseur* who, at the time of its publication, noted that the book "should be celebrated. because it represents a new highpoint in the growing interest in 19th century American prints." In what he calls her "exemplary" work, he lauds Schneider's commentary on each

print, the details in the appendices, the compilation of the contemporary reviews and the facts about the market and the merchandising of Parrish's prints. Printed on archival paper with high resolution images, the book is a thought-provoking walk through the entire print-making career of Parrish. For a visual preview of the book, please go to her web site at www.ronashneiderprints.com. To purchase the book please send your check for \$75, which includes shipping and handling, to Rona Schneider at 12 Monroe Place, Brooklyn Heights, NY 11201. Contact: rschneider-prints@aol.com.

Remembering Mary Cole

Julian Hyman

I was invited to attend a celebration of the life of Mary Myers Cole, who passed away on November 28, 2008. The memorial was hosted by her two sisters and took place on Fire Island on August 9. The guests were all from Fire Island; Mimi Siegel and I were the only attendees from the print world, with which Mary had been so involved. She worked side by side with her husband, the late Sylvan Cole, especially at the many print shows and fairs where they presented work. At the time of her passing, Mary was writing a book about the Association of American Artists, which Sylvan ran for many years. The family plans to see the project through to publication, and the book will contain many interesting facts about numerous artists whose work Club members have collected over the years. The early prices of many of these prints will amaze us!

Mary and Sylvan became dear family friends and trusted art advisors, and Mary was a recipient each spring of a bunch of beautiful peonies that were grown in our garden. She was a warm and loving person who had held many interesting positions before she met and married

Sylvan. It was a great pleasure for me to spend time with both Mary and Sylvan, and I will miss her very much.

The program for the service, which carried a photo of a radiantly smiling Mary, carried this quote from her cousin, Barbara Meglis:

"Her love of art and color and style was evident just looking at her. From her tightly coiffed hair to her beautifully manicured hands, she was a study in elegance. And she wore her refined sense of color so we could all share her joyful effervescence. Her radiant smile and eloquent words spoke kindness and love to those for whom she cared most deeply: her dear friends at The Pines on Fire Island; her friends, neighbors and colleagues in New York and the art world; and her large network of family with whom she corresponded frequently.

Although she left us too soon, she left the world we live in a more beautiful place."

Members of the Print Club will also miss Mary's presence among us.

The New York Society of Etchers, Inc. Presents:

Contemporary Etchings and Monotypes

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY OF ETCHERS, and their affiliate MONOTYPE SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, will present a joint exhibition for the first time this fall at the National Arts Club in New York City. The newly formed MONOTYPE SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, led by NYSE Director Bruce Waldman, was created in response to the resurgence and continuing growth of new work in this medium — with many etchers among the most enthusiastic practitioners. Prints in the two media will be exhibited side-by-side in an expanded two-gallery format more than doubling usual exhibit space taken by the Etchers for their important annual at the National Arts Club.

This exhibition was curated for the printmakers by Ms.

Samantha Rippner, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The exhibition dates, selected to coincide with New York City's Print Week, are from November 2nd through November 13th 2009 at The National Arts Club.

This year, the annual show, by invitation, will include the work of guest printmakers from two other countries, Israel and Australia. All of these artists from Israel are associated with the Pyramida Centre for Contemporary Art of Haifa. Following the close of the New York exhibition at the National Arts Club, the exhibition will be sent to Israel for display at the PCCA in Haifa, and exhibited during the Winter of 2010. The Pyramida Centre for Contemporary Art is a not-for-profit organization founded

in 1992 that is housed in a renovated building complex in Israel's third largest city — Haifa. The center houses multiple artist studios for permanent and guest artists, and extensive gallery space for the promotion of contemporary visual arts across an international spectrum. Under the leadership of its current Director, Avraham Eilat, the center serves as a meeting place for artists from all corners of the globe. Leading Australian printmakers Marco and Deborah Luccio, who are respectively an etcher and monotypist, will also be showcased during this event.

The New York Society of Etchers was founded in 1998. Since the group began its exhibition programming in 2000, it has organized and collaborated in nearly forty exhibitions of artist prints. Principally, these efforts have focused on the graphic arts of local emerging artists and not-for-profit workshops, though, several of the shows have involved international collaborations with visual artists from Hungary, China, France, Ireland, Australia, Ukraine and Peru. Still other exhibitions have been organized on behalf of cultural institutions including the Museum of the City of New York, the Transit Museum New York, the Housatonic Museum in Bridgeport, CT, and the Ukrainian Institute of America. Ten of these exhibitions have been documented in professionally published catalogues. The New York Society of Etchers, Inc. is an artist-run print maker organization serving New York based artists. The current directors of the group are Stephen A. Fredericks, Andy P. Hoogenboom, Steven Walker, Denise Kasof, Bruce Waldman, Sara Sears, and Louis Netter.

The National Arts Club is located at 15 Gramercy Park South, aka East 20th Street, NY, NY. The galleries are open daily during normal business hours and on weekends from 12pm until 6 pm.

For additional information about the New York Society of Etchers visit www.nysetchers.org, or contact info@nysetchers.org. "Contemporary Etchings and Monotypes" is an exhibition of prints that is part of the greater **New York Fine Art Print Week** organized by the



Bruce Waldman, *Man Savage*.

COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK SOCIETY OF ETCHERS.

International Fine Print Dealers Association in conjunction with the Annual IFPDA Print Fair. A full listing of events can be found on www.printfair.com.

New Prints by Richard Bosman From Tandem Press

Print Club members will be interested to know that past presentation print artist Richard Bosman has recently editioned three new color woodcuts with Tandem Press in Madison, WI: *River Rising*, *Tracks*, and *Blizzard*. As is typical with Bosman's work, the new prints are both bold and rather mysterious. They have a compelling emotional impact on the viewer.

These three new prints will be available in December. For more information go to: www.tandempress.wisc.edu.

Renewal Reminder

By now, all members should have sent in their dues for the current year. If you have not yet done so, please take care of this immediately. You will not receive the McPherson print and risk having your spot given to a new applicant.

Member Notes

Print Club member **Herb Levart** is having an exhibition of his photographs titled *Three decades — 60s, 70s and 80s — of photojournalism by Herb Levart* at Greenburgh Public Library, 300 Tarrytown Road, Elmsford, NY from October 4 to November 7, 2009. The opening reception is Sunday afternoon, October 4 at 2 pm. For directions and library hours see www.greenburghlibrary.org or call (914) 721-8200. Herb worked as a professional photographer for 35 years and won the Certificate for Excellence in Communication Graphics for 1975-76 from the American Institute of Graphic Arts.

Memberships Available

A limited number of spaces are available for new Print Club members during the current year. If you know of someone who would enjoy being a part of our organization, please share with them the application form included on page 15 of this issue.



P.O. BOX 4477 / GRAND CENTRAL STATION / NEW YORK, NY 10163 / 212-479-7915

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail Address:

Please state briefly why you are interested in joining The Print Club of New York:

How did you learn about the Print Club?

Are you a collector, artist, dealer, curator, art historian etc.?

Which committees are you interested in joining? Please circle those listed below:

Events Committee, Publications Committee, Membership Committee,
Print Selection Committee, Public Relations Committee

Membership includes an invitation to all educational events, receiving our quarterly newsletter and our presentation print and an invitation to our annual meeting.

(Dues for 2009/2010 are \$225.)

Send this application for membership in The Print Club of New York Inc. to:

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monarubin@aol.com